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# PERFINS OF THE SPANISH PHILIPPINES

By Don Peterson

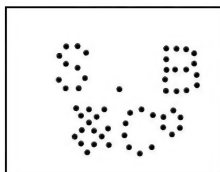
Three business firms are known to have created perfins during the Spanish period. The perfins were created by punching holes into the stamp -usually applied to the front of the pane. The purpose was to prevent theft of the stamps. The perfins are found on loose stamps, but none are known on cover. These firms and a description of the perfins are listed below.

## Smith, Bell and Company

**Company Background:** This British firm was founded in Liverpool, England in 1846. It opened an office in Manila in early 1847, and later expanded to other Philippine cities. During the 1870s and 1880s, when its perfins were in use, this firm had branch offices in Cebu and Iloilo. Smith, Bell and Company has a major business role in the Philippines. It was a shipping agent for many key agricultural exports, such as sugar and hemp; and it was a marine insurance agent. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was acquired by Filipino interests. This firm continued through 1898 and is present today in the Philippines under its original name

**Description of Perfin:** The S.B & Co perfin is two-lined with 'S.B' on top and the '& Co' on the bottom. It has a period after the 'S' but not after the 'B' This perfin is known to occur in Scott #43 (earliest known Philippine perfin), 52, 56, 72, 78-80, 81, 87 and

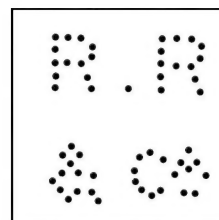
88. It also occurs inverted and reversed (punched from the back of the pane). It was used on Smith, Bell and Company mail from the 1870s through the 1880s.



## R.R. and Company

**Company Background:** Little is known about this firm, including its nationality and true name. This firm was present in Manila from the 1870s through the 1880s.

**Description of the Perfin:** The 'R.R & Ca.' Perfin is two-lined with 'R.R' on top and '& Ca' on the bottom. It has a period after the first 'R' but not after the second. This perfin is known to occur in Scott# 63, 67, 71-73, 75, 89, and 116. It was used on R. and R. and Company mail from the 1870s through the 1880s.



## H. and Company

**Company Background:** Little is known about this firm, including its nationality and true name. This firm was present in Manila, and possibly Iloilo, from the 1880s through 1898. Some have speculated that it is Heacock and Company which was located in Manila in the 20th century. However, there is no confirmation to that claim.

**Description of Perfin:** The "H. & Co" perfin is believed to be in a straight line. It is known to occur on 1898 issues only, including Scott #s 201, 204, and 204 (used imperforate) There is no evidence this perfin was continued under the U.S. Administration. No complete illustration of this perfin is available.

## REFERENCES

Peterson, Donald, J. 1983. Perfins of the Philippines. IPPS News #3.

Peterson, Don. Smith. 1997. Bell and Company: a British firm in the Spanish Philippines, 1847-1898. Philippine Philatelic Journal XIX (3).

Peterson, Don. 1998. Mail markings of private business firms of the Spanish Philippines. Washington, DC.

**Editors note:** The above article was forwarded to me (with the author's permission to publish it) by Harvey Tilles (LM-7). It is [?speaker's notes?] from a talk given by Mr. Peterson at StampShow'03. I have replaced the original photocopied illustrations

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with Photoshop produced illustrations of the patterns. The photocopies would not have reproduced at all well and they were enlargements but, as a result, the size of the patterns shown is not

1:1 with the original pattern. The patterns discussed are all shown in the Asia section of Bob Schwerdt's World Perfins Catalog. They are A4 – H&Co, A6 – R.R/&CA, and A7 – S.B/&Co.

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